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Conf.

Oslo, July 22-31, 1947

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The Story of Oslo



Second World Conference
of Christian Youth



Francis House
Conference Secretary

Oslo Cathedral

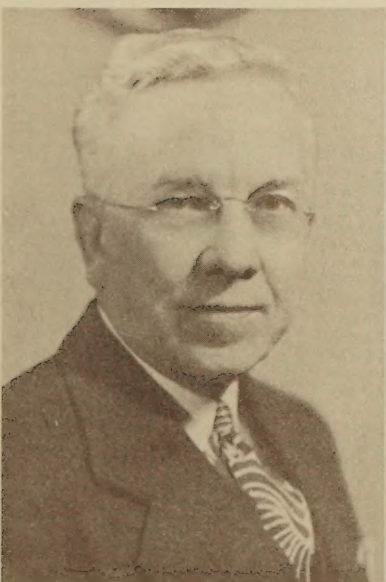




Rena Weller, *Daily Chairman*
from U.S.A.



Alex Johnson, *Conference*
Chairman



Kirtley F. Mather, *Speaker*
from U.S.A.



W. A. Visser 't Hooft



Oslo Fjord



Karl Johansgate, main street leading to palace

The Story of Oslo

A Popular Report of the Second World Conference
of Christian Youth, Oslo, Norway, July 22-31, 1947

WITH SUGGESTIONS OF THINGS TO DO
FOR YOUTH AND STUDENT GROUPS



By ROWENA FERGUSON

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NOTES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

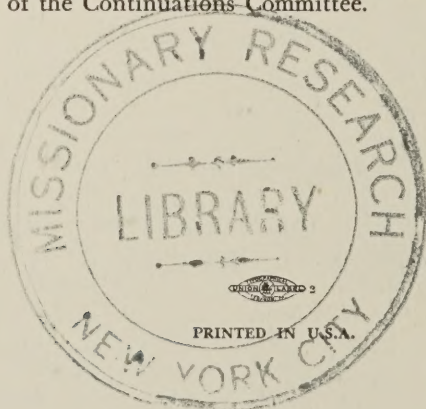
Miss Rowena Ferguson is Associate Editor of *Highroad, A Journal for Youth*. In addition to serving as a member of the Oslo Conference press staff, Miss Ferguson represented the Christian youth publications of this country at Oslo and at the Lund (Sweden) meeting of the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches. She was a delegate to the recent meeting of the World Council of Christian Education at Birmingham, England. She is author of the Oslo study booklet, *Christian Youth in the United States of America*.

ABOUT THE COVER

The picture on the front cover reproduces a poster announcing the Youth Rally at Bislet Stadium and bearing the conference emblem. The emblem represents a young man, rising from prayer and reaching out to the world—symbolized by the circle—under the cross of Christ, symbol of *Jesus Christ is Lord*, the theme of the conference.

ABOUT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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FOREWORD

At the second World Conference of Christian Youth more than 1200 young people and leaders representing 71 different countries and 181 different churches and organizations came together making the declaration: *Jesus Christ is Lord*.

This is a popular story of the conference to be shared with the tens of thousands who were not able to attend Oslo, but who follow with interest and with hope what happened there. It was a tremendous experience far transcending what had been anticipated. In these brief pages the author brings you the spirit of this first great postwar ecumenical gathering of youth.

WILLIAM KEYS, *Secretary for Youth Work*
American Committee for the World
Council of Churches

New York
December, 1947

PART ONE

First Day

THE heavy doors swung open and out into the paved courtyard streamed a company of people, organ music swelling behind them and the twilight sky of a long northern evening stretching before them. The people walked slowly and lingered in little knots of two and three and four by the balustrade, on the steps down to the city street. They talked mostly in quiet tones over the ringing consciousness of words just heard. "Let us *be* what we are, the citizens of God's Kingdom of justice and love." Now there were scraps of laughter and a called "goodbye," and at last as darkness came down the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Trinity was deserted.

Thus on the evening of July 31, 1947, in Oslo, Norway, a great event in Christian history came to a close. But not to an end, for the lives of the people in that church had been changed, and because of that the experience of young people the world over would be different in the months and years ahead. The event had formally begun nine swift days ago.

On July 22 in Oslo it was hotter than it should have been. The air-conditioning system in modern Filadelfia Hall was not up to the weather, but that seemed of small concern to the crowd that rapidly filled both the lower floor and the large balcony. Each person admitted to the main floor was required to show a badge, and as he entered he searched among prominent signs reading China, India, The Netherlands, the United States, France, Korea, Mexico, Great Britain, and many other countries, for his proper place. Excitement ran as high as the temperature. Conversation buzzed and crackled in Swedish, Malay, French, Czech, German, English. Suddenly powerful klieg lights were trained on

the audience for the benefit of movie, newsreel, and still photographers, professional and amateur. Before long the sound engineer made a last adjustment of the microphone, and the lights were reversed toward the three-tiered stage. A young man in a plain dark suit stepped to the speaker's desk.

"You will stand," said Alex Johnson in vigorous confident tones and so declared the second World Conference of Christian Youth formally in session.

From seventy-one countries had come more than 1,200 delegates and leaders representing all the great communions of Christendom, both Catholic and Protestant, except the Roman Catholic Church whose student organization, Pax Romana, did, however, send six fraternal delegates. Two years after the close of a global war that had split the nations of the world apart in violence and hatred, the Christian Church brought together its young people for renewal of fellowship and healing of spiritual wounds. Norway had invited the conference to meet in her capital city, not only as a courteous gesture, but also to demonstrate her faith in a rehabilitated world and an ecumenical church. The sponsoring agencies of the conference were the World Council of Churches, the World's Alliance of Y.M.C.A.'s, the World's Y.W.C.A., the World's Student Christian Federation, the World's Sunday School Association (now the World Council of Christian Education), the International Missionary Council, the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, and the World's Christian Endeavor Union. They had been glad to accept the Norwegian invitation because it gave opportunity for large numbers of delegates, especially those from the American continents, to come closer to the tragedy that had befallen the people of Europe. Already the young people in this day of registering and getting settled in a strange city had encountered the unfailing and gracious hospitality of the Norwegians. And already Oslo

citizens were encountering with good-natured amazement all these foreigners with their strange speech and dress.

Now the assembled conference stood and the young Norwegian pastor, Alex Johnson, who was general chairman, began in prayer:

O, Jesus Christ, our Lord
Jesus Christ notre Seigneur
Jesus Christus unser Herr.

Three languages, one of them having bitter associations for many of the people present. And yet these young people had not come representing their various nations. They affirmed a higher loyalty: Jesus Christ is Lord. This theme of the conference, in French, German, English, and Norwegian, painted in blue and white, dominated with its huge proportions the entire front of the auditorium. All heads bowed, black, brown, red, sandy, corn-colored, and in all hearts alike, Bob, Hans, Tove, Per, Hassan, Lur's, Tijan, Shouning, echoed the prayer of the chairman:

We thank Thee that Thou has gathered us here in Thy grace.

We pray Thee to come here and abide with us in these days.

Open our eyes that we may see Thy power and Thy glory in this world and in the world to come. AMEN.

The conference had begun after twenty months of careful, complicated planning. Untold effort was spent in accumulating the necessary money, in obtaining passage by sea or air, in getting official papers. Some delegates without a country traveled on Nansen passports and others from occupied countries were required to have military permits. The delegation from China flew all the way to Oslo by private plane chartered from the Lutheran World Federation. It was an unconverted military aircraft and so not designed for comfort. But the Chinese, after days of flying over India, the

Near East, Egypt, and Europe, were as expectant and alert as those whose only travel had been a North Sea passage from Britain.

The delegations were introduced by continents, but some countries were conspicuously missing. The Japanese young people, having received assurances from the authorities in advance, had gathered in Tokyo where a great farewell service of consecration was held, but just before sailing time word was received that they should return to their homes. Since the governments of Australia and New Zealand did not approve their journey, the Far Eastern Commission recommended that permission be withheld. There were also no representatives from Soviet Russia. Although invited to send a group, the Moscow Patriarchate had not felt ready to be represented at this first post-war ecumenical gathering. Delegates were present from such countries as Finland, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, sometimes considered within the Russian sphere of influence.

The hot lights continued to burn during the formalities of greetings and the translations into French, German, or English, the three conference languages, but they were turned off and the audience settled themselves more comfortably as the main speaker was introduced. He was the Reverend Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, of the Dutch Reformed Church and known to some of the delegates as the general chairman of the first World Conference of Christian Youth held at Amsterdam in the summer of 1939, and to many more as the present general secretary of the World Council of Churches. Now he rose to make the keynote address. Everyone present wondered what he would say that would set the tone and point the direction for the next nine days.

Eight years ago some 1,500 young people from seventy countries met in Amsterdam. They had been brought together by one person whom they knew and came to know as Christus Victor. To Him they sang their hymn of praise "*A toi la gloire*" (*Thine*

is the Glory) in that unforgettable last hour of their meeting. Four weeks later the second world war began. Would it not wipe out the very memory of Amsterdam? It did not. It became clear that it was precisely this world of war and suffering which Christ had overcome. Amsterdam had given us the message and the vision which enabled us to live in prisoner camps, in army barracks, in refugee centres, in occupied lands. The refugee who fled from her country with just a Bible and a list of Amsterdam delegates was a symbol for our whole family.

Thus Christus Victor proved His power as the dominating reality for those who had let themselves be overcome by Him. All through the dark years they looked forward to the day when it would again become possible to manifest that He had continued to unite His people, in fact, that He had united them more deeply when they were isolated from each other. In the midst of the war we were asked again and again: When will be the next "Amsterdam"? And now we may meet again after eight years. . . .

We meet in a world situation in which all that we stand for is emphatically denied. . . .

We stand for a world consisting of nations and races made of one blood and therefore responsible for and in solidarity with each other. We believe that humanity is *one* in the sight of God and under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. But we live in a world which threatens to disintegrate into several self-sufficient partial worlds, each living in isolation from the others. . . .

The division between the Russian world and the western world is the deepest, because it represents a fundamental spiritual cleavage. It is a misunderstanding in the deepest sense of the word. For Russia and the western world use the same words but in completely different meanings. And misunderstanding breeds mistrust, while mistrust breeds conflict. If we really mean business in our desire for a one-world-consciousness and a one-world solidarity, we must face this basic factor in the present time situation, recognize it as the expression of the deep illness and seek tenaciously and passionately for ways to overcome it. . . .

The word "Christian" in the name of our conference does not simply indicate that we come together as people who happen to have the same religion. It means that we dare to call ourselves disciples of the One whose name is above every other name, the Lord Jesus Christ. It means that we believe it to be a matter of life and death whether men acknowledge Him or not. But the world of today does not provide many open doors for that all-

embracing Gospel. . . . During the war years it seemed—as if for a brief moment—that the world began to understand the tragedy of its lordlessness, and the meaninglessness of its sterile or abused freedom. But the postwar years have not brought us the revival of virile Christianity for which many of us hoped. Vital Christianity is today almost everywhere a minority movement. And the process of secularisation of the masses through our modern impersonal technical culture has not been arrested. We must be very sober about the chances of the Church to make a real impact on the world of our time.

The fact that we meet as representatives of *youth* is an expression of our conviction that youth has a specific task, a definite contribution and the right to accomplish that task and to make that contribution. . . . How shall youth construct or reconstruct in a world in which the constructive possibilities seem to be destined to shipwreck on the rocks of politics? How shall they work for social and international justice in a world where rights are no longer a binding common standard but a battlecry to cover up mere self-interest? How can they be expected to get a sense of direction in a world which has ceased to conceive any meaning of life except that which men put arbitrarily upon their own existence? . . .

. . . A handicap far more serious than the denial by the world is *our own* denial of the things which we proclaim. . . . We do not appear to the world as a community with a clear record. We are not known as champions of unity, as convincing messengers of the Gospel, as liberators of the energies of youth. And it is only by a frank confession of our unfaithfulness that we can clear the way for that new beginning for which we hope. . . .

It is then quite clear that we dare not point to ourselves, to our own churches and movements, to our own answers and solutions. We are not here to sing the praise of Christian youth or to advertise the world Christian youth movement as the saviour of the world. We want to say to the world and to ourselves: We have not got the answers. We are as perplexed as anybody. But we know where the answers are to be found. . . . For *Jesus is Lord*. Do not look at *us*, but look at *Him*. *He is Lord*. . . .

His criticism of our superficialities, our vanities, our egocentricities, will be far more severe than any that comes from our fellow delegates. But the encouragement, the new force and light and insight which in His love He will give us, will be incomparably more helpful than any help that we can give each other.

And when we shall have great difficulty in understanding each other, when we become impatient about the strange notions of our fellow delegates, about the obstacles on the road to full Christian unity, about the conservatism of Christian institutions, or especially about our own inability to respond fully to His Lordship—then we will have to remember His extraordinary patience with men. We will not hesitate to pay a real price for the renewal and unity of the Church, if we are aware of the fact that He died “to gather into one the scattered children of God.” (John 11: 52.)

There had been excitement during this opening afternoon session, but there was a real lift of the heart at the first service of worship the evening of the same day. The delegates made their way to the busy square near the center of the city where the cathedral stands in its pleasant yard of grass and trees and benches for loiterers. To many of the young people this place was already famous, for in this church yard during the Nazi occupation the people of Oslo had gathered, in the face of police threats, to sing “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” The worshipers on this evening were remembering, too, that from this sturdy pulpit Bishop Eivind Berggrav had defied the Nazis with words that most of the Norwegian pastors took as a signal for resigning their state offices: “Christians recognize Jesus Christ as their Lord, totally and without reserve.” This stout defiance resulted in the bishop’s imprisonment for three years; but it not only crystallized the resistance movement within Norway, it invigorated and inspired the Church throughout the world.

On this occasion the cathedral was filled to every corner with young people from all parts of the Christian Church to join in an ecumenical service of worship led by Bishop Berggrav. The mellow glow of the lights was reflected in dark woodwork, and here and there picked up the brilliance of some delegate’s costume, the rich purple of an Indian girl’s sari, the bright yellow of a Burmese head scarf, the sharp black and white of an African robe. The tension tight-

ened as the bishop appeared in the picturesque canonicals of the Lutheran Church, black gown and stiff white ruff.

Already at the opening session Bishop Berggrav's warmth and humor had captured the hearts of the delegates. He brought the greeting of the church not in formal stateliness but in one cheery sentence and a wave of the hand. The thunderous applause brought out a wonderfully "unheroic" twinkle. In this more solemn setting no one was moved to applause, but many throats were tight. To join the bishop in leading the service came young people representing the five continents and the branches of Christendom around the world. In dress from East and West, they stood with this hero of the modern Church, a true symbol of the oneness of Christ's Church and of brotherhood among men.

The worshipers, singing from *Cantate Domino*, the ecumenical youth hymnal produced by the Student Christian Movement, praying in their native tongues as well as the three official conference languages, were sharing in a dramatic act of deep significance. Here, as the first conference day came to a close, was affirmed in very deed the fact of first importance to Christians: Jesus Christ is Lord of all men, of all the Church, of all the world.

Differences

MY NAME is Kean Nyan," said the dark haired young man on the back row. "I'm Chinese from Malaya, and I represent the Methodist Youth Fellowship."

The next person spoke up. "I'm Burt Henning from Sweden, an economist, and I represent the Y.M.C.A."

"T. J. Hansen, a theological student in Oslo." He was big and blond, and his English was hesitant. "I became interested in the ecumenical church while in other countries in the air service during the war."

"Roger Manners from the U.S.A.—the Pilgrim Fellowship of the Congregational Christian Churches."

"My name is Richard Blount. I'm from Missouri in the U.S." Everybody laughed. Richard's speech was a kind of thick American that non-English speaking people can hardly understand. Another U.S. delegate offered to "translate."

Next came Tove Tordrup of the Student Christian Movement in Denmark, followed by David Mitchell, a young pastor in the British West Indies who had been lately studying in England.

"I do not speak English. Will you translate please?" The girl with the brown curls spoke in German. "My name is Katarzyna Niszk, and I'm a teacher in a folk school in Poland. I belong to the Lutheran Church."

In quick succession came a bright-eyed young man named Himbury, a Baptist from Wales, representing the Student Christian Movement; a young pastor of the Reformed Church in Holland, named Pet de Vries; and Dora Schlatter of the Y.W.C.A. in Germany, who was hardly ten years old in the crucial year, 1933.

The next young woman with dark hair and eyes and wearing a beautiful Indian dress spoke in soft fluent English: "My name is Jaya Dalip Singh. I represent the Y.W.C.A. in Northern India, where we have been working recently in riot relief." She was followed by Peter Duncan, from Hull, England, who worked in the building trades and represented the Christian Workers Union.

Then there was a pause and the delicately blond girl, in a national dress that the others found hard to identify, hesitated. In a few seconds she spoke haltingly in German: "I'm the only one here who has no home address." Her voice broke a little in the dead quiet. "I'm a displaced person in Germany. My name is Ausma Wejland, and I am Latvian."

Here they were, a little cross section of the conference, one of thirty-five small groups who met for three hours each day for discussion and Bible study. Each group was assigned one of nine topics for study and discussion among which the delegates had chosen:

1. Freedom and Order, *Economic and Political*
2. Christian Responsibility in a Secular Environment, *Cultural, Ideological*
3. World Order, *International Relations and Organization*
4. Man and His Inventions, *Technological, Scientific Progress*
5. The Family in the Community, *Social and Communal*
6. The Christian Congregation in the Local Community, *Nature and Function of the Local Church*
7. Education in the Modern World, *Education for Social Responsibility*
8. The Christian Faces the Situation of the Jew, *The Christian's Responsibility*
9. The Church Faces the World, *Nature, Message, Unity, Task of the Church*

Each group was in the charge of a delegate chairman and had the services of two adults, a Bible study leader and a discussion leader.

To these small meetings each young person brought his national background, his religious traditions, his personal experience, his special problems, each one differing from every other one. Here in this intimate, face-to-face relationship came the real testing. The first hurdle to jump was language, one that was not always solved by translators, for people speaking the same language attached different meanings to the same words.

At the beginning there was much exploring of personal experience and interchange of information. It did not take long, however, for rapport to be established and for each person to settle down comfortably, knowing that while his views might be challenged, he was always free to express them and that he, himself, would be regarded by all the others as a friend. This is just the kind of atmosphere in which truth is most readily arrived at. On one occasion when the argument had been especially hot, a European girl said with over-earnestness, "But how can anyone believe that? I do not understand." An American girl replied with a smile: "Look, relax. They just do believe it and it seems to work for them." The first girl smiled back and relaxed. They left the group arm in arm debating whether or not the truth might lie somewhere between their two positions.

On another occasion a group was discussing the church, trying to arrive at a common mind on what the church is. There were almost as many views expressed as people in the room. The Baptist from Wales, the Reformed Church pastor from Holland, and the Methodist from the British West Indies represented major positions around which the others clustered with minor variations. There seemed no possibility of agreement. The discussion was tense and heated. At last the discussion leader interrupted,

"I want to ask you a question," he said. "Are we *now, here*, in this room, the church?"

"Yes," the response was spontaneous and unanimous.

Suddenly it was clear to all with no further word from the leader, that many of their different opinions were due to differing traditions and backgrounds. When they spoke only out of the past they saw much on which to disagree, but when they examined their common experience, even though each came to it with a different heritage, they found a large area of agreement on which they might stand together without any minimizing of differences. There were those who felt that this fact of differences that do not divide was the chief message of Oslo and is the fundamental fact about the ecumenical church.

This feeling was strongest in the discussion groups where idea met idea in close quarters. Each group formulated a report of its findings that was sent to the Conference Committee to be included in a single document distributed at the final plenary session. These reports do not show in each case a neatly tied up discussion with directions plainly marked and precise conclusions arrived at. They do show the kind of thinking that was done and those things the delegates believed to be of major concern.*

The fact of differences was evident also in the Bible study sessions that involved the same groupings. Thus daily each person spent one hour and a half in Bible study and a like time in discussion with the same people. All testimony agrees that this plan was one of the best conference arrangements because it provided for intimacy and individuality in the midst of a large gathering that otherwise might have been too impersonal. Outlines for the Bible study periods center-

* For these complete documents with suggestions for further discussion see "The Report of the Second World Conference of Christian Youth." It may be ordered from the American Committee for the World Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y., at \$1.00 per copy.

ing on certain passages of Scripture (Deuteronomy 8, Isaiah 58, Matthew 4: 1-11, Colossians 1: 12-23, John 8: 31-36, Philippians 2: 1-16) had been prepared in advance and distributed to the delegates. These passages were read with minute attention to detail. Then followed an analysis of how these details should be interpreted in terms of one's individual experience. Thus the study was highly personal and for that reason sometimes controversial. Also, some times it led to a dead end when certain verses seemed not to strike fire with the group. In all cases, however, there was an eagerness to discover meaning, and a firm conviction of the centrality of Scripture. Even those delegates who were unfamiliar with this method of Bible study and were inclined to call it rather a study of Christian experience as related to the Bible felt its worth and wanted to understand it better.

For many young people the small groups were the heart of the conference where it was possible most strongly to feel the ties and to sense the power of the total community.

The intimate relationships I have developed with Christians of all races, traditions, and colors means that I can never think of people in far-off lands with a remote sort of sympathy, but in a new, personal way. Our brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ is a living fact as never before.

Another delegate, from India, said:

The thrill of making new friendships with people of strange languages and peculiar costumes and the humorous attempts at pronouncing certain names did go to make the life of the conference keep a balance between the earthly and the spiritual. Through the jovial and friendly atmosphere that prevailed throughout the conference I have been brought to realize more than ever before that people all over the world, in spite of political and denominational differences, have a fundamental unity in Christ. Behind the confusing tongues *I could read one common language of Christian love and regard for one another.*

And yet the conference was not taking place in a vacuum but in the world. It was not possible to forget the world

even if anyone had wanted to. The world's conflicts impinged on the conference on the first day with the news that the Dutch government had begun open warfare with the Indonesian Nationalists. Dr. Visser 't Hooft had referred to this event in his opening address and had expressed penitence for the actions of the Dutch government. Both the Dutch and Indonesian delegates were dismayed and deeply disheartened to think that their home peoples were killing each other at the precise moment when Christians were meeting in the name of Christian brotherhood. Would such world events mean that Oslo was a mockery? With that question uppermost, the two delegations met together. After prayer and heart searching these young people decided that the very fact of Oslo had meaning for such a tragedy as was taking place in Indonesia. Christian people whose allegiance to Jesus Christ transcends any other loyalty are just the persons who may bring Christian insight to bear upon world affairs. Because these young people were meeting under the banner of Christ meant that they could speak out of a sense of brotherhood that was beyond nationalism and from a view that took in all partial views. The delegates from The Netherlands and from the islands of Indonesia did so speak. Here is the joint statement which they presented to the conference:

The Indonesian and Dutch delegations at the World Conference of Christian Youth in Oslo have discussed and prayed together and are grateful that this is possible within the framework of this conference with its title, *Jesus Christ is Lord*, precisely at the moment when the two peoples are at war with each other.

The Dutch delegation confesses with distress the shortcomings of the Christians of The Netherlands. It considers the lack of true spiritual concern, of passionate prayer, and of true Christian unity as contributory cause of the disaster which has come to Indonesia.

The Indonesian delegation takes its stand on the conviction

that the use of armed force must be halted immediately and the way of negotiation must be resumed.

The Dutch delegation, convinced of the right of the Indonesian people to liberty and independence, is acutely conscious of the tremendous danger which the use of arms implies for a good relationship between the two peoples. It is convinced that every opportunity of halting the use of arms immediately must be seized in order to return to the way of negotiation.

The members of both delegations desire to continue to meet each other as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, in order to help clear the road toward co-operation between the two peoples on a basis of liberty and equal rights.

Political differences arose between other groups day by day. Strong nationalist feelings, while not often given public expression, ran as an undercurrent to the official program. They provoked many spontaneous meetings of delegations, especially between delegates from so-called "imperialist" countries and those from so-called "colonial" countries. Young people from different sides in the late war felt impelled to meet one another in close contact. For example, the German delegation met with that from Czechoslovakia. "There was plain speaking. The Czechoslovaks told of what Germans had done to them and their country. The Germans acknowledged their share in the corporate guilt of their country. That penitent attitude put quite a different spirit into the meeting. There was no room for recrimination or bitter words."

These informal and non-programmed sessions were a "remarkable witness to the working of the Spirit of God with the result that, in several instances, the deepest sense of fellowship was arrived at on the plane of the greatest tensions."

This was especially evident one warm night at a meeting of the Indian delegation. The small classroom in the trade school, drearily lighted by a single unshaded overhead lamp, was crowded and noisy with talk. The talk was all in clipped

and fluent British English because the Indians would not have been able to understand each other in their diverse, native dialects. The chairman called for order, his sensitive intelligent face, earnest and unsmiling. Matters of business were hardly out of the way before a young Indian student was on his feet asking for the floor.

"I want to make a confession. It seems to me we have failed to arrive at true Christian fellowship with the English students who are here. In our meeting the other day we did not get anywhere. We did not deal with the issues between us."

"That's right," said someone else, "we met and were just polite to each other. That is not Christian fellowship."

Then everybody was talking at once and the chairman called repeatedly for order. Out of a stirring of conscience and a sense of moral obligation, these keen young Indians declared that understanding between Christian students in India and those in England was long overdue. Accordingly a sub-committee was appointed to meet with a like group from the British delegation to draft a statement of intention. As follows, it was presented to the conference at the final plenary session:

1. As young Christians we wish to express our joy at our opportunity for meeting together at this conference. Further, believing in the right of every nation to be free, we rejoice together in India's being on the threshold of independence.

At the same time we are aware of our failure at Oslo to utilize our opportunities to build understanding between the two delegations with respect to the basic questions that concern the relationship between our two peoples. But we are confident that the way to overcome this failure is through the grace of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

2. We believe that the evangelization of all nations is the responsibility of each and every member of Christ's Church. We recognize that India needs and welcomes all possible help in the evangelistic enterprise.

3. We emphasize the necessity of training indigenous leadership for the Church and the provision of facilities for higher studies in all branches of Christian service.

4. We wish to bring to the notice of all young Christians the new situation the Church is already facing in certain parts of India and, in the face of this challenge, to call them to renewed dedication and prayer.

5. Finally in the new situation we are convinced of the necessity of close contact between the Christian youth of both nations in their common service of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

As a first step in carrying out these points, the delegates called for a conference of Indian and British Christian students to be held in England the coming fall.

Worship

THE unaccompanied voice of the choir rose in haunting, minor harmonies. Candle flames burned straight and tall in the quiet air around the altar undisturbed by the slow, even movements of the priest. His crown and gold-colored vestments glittered even in the half light when he turned to the people chanting in rhythmic Greek the old, old prayers. In symbol and liturgy, with music and incense, was being enacted the ancient drama that is the Holy Eucharist of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church. For most of the delegates this was a worship experience of a new order. The slow pace, the strange but beautiful music, the stately language, some of which was English especially for this occasion, the elaborate ceremonial at the altar that kept the eyes busy, the color and the hush and the sense of brooding peace, made a deep but unfamiliar impression. The worship booklet in the conference packet had explained the significance of the communion service in the Eastern tradition. The young people understood its various parts as being a symbolic drama of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, culminating in the taking of the sacrament only by members of the Orthodox Church. They were few in number and came quickly and informally to receive the elements from the bishop so that the end arrived rather suddenly. Soon the bishop and his assisting clergy were leaving the cathedral in solemn procession. At the door they were met by everybody who could lay hands on a camera. Such was the genial spirit of Bishop Pantaleimon that not a person was disappointed although it meant a long delay after a long service.

This service took its place among the others that opened

each day's activities. Each one was in the tradition of one of the churches represented at the conference, and was interpreted for the delegates in the worship booklet written in three languages. Thus, for example, young people of a free Baptist communion were not entirely unprepared for the Swedish Lutheran liturgy, a service which makes less of a break with the medieval Roman Catholic tradition than other Reformation churches. And delegates from the United States knew something of what to expect from the more liturgical and formal European churches. It was a great experience of sharing, for the variety was rich and stimulating. The initial sense of strangeness among those participating in a particular form of worship for the first time was soon dissipated in a sense of appreciation and fellowship.

The delegates from churches in which tradition is not emphasized felt moved by the continuity with the long past and by the esthetic strength of a liturgy that has remained unchanged for hundreds of years. Those used to this kind of tradition felt the freshness and exhilaration of an American service arranged especially for this occasion in which young lay delegates officiated. All those from the Protestant wing were caught up by the mystery and emotional power of the Orthodox service.

It was on Saturday morning, however, that everybody experienced a wider fellowship in worship and a new exaltation of spirit. On that occasion Professor Mayeda, a Japanese from Geneva, led the conference in a service of worship that had been prepared by Miss Kiyo Takeda, one of the Japanese delegation who was unable to be in Oslo in person. That they were there in spirit no one doubted, for the message from Japan touched every heart.

We have just learned that it is impossible for us to attend the conference. We had been looking forward with eager anticipation to the splendid opportunity of meeting you young people from

many countries all over the world and of discussing the great problems that face the world today. As we all realize, the significance of our getting together after these sad and terrible years of fighting and separation cannot be measured. Our disappointment, of course, is too great to tell in words. . . .

We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to you for your kind invitation to this very significant conference of Christian youth of the world. When our country is under occupation and has no international standing otherwise, to receive a cordial invitation to this international conference of Christian youth has meant far more to us Japanese Christian youth than perhaps you could imagine. It gave us encouragement and reassurance in our belief in the brotherhood of men in Christ our Saviour. . .

Will you remember that in Japan there is a group of young Christians who, encouraged by your invitation and by the full support of all the Christians in the country, kept fighting against all difficulties in order to come to this conference till the day before the boat was to leave, only because they are as keen as any to work for the realization of one world for Christ. . .

We will, too, remember you in our studies, thoughts and prayers and look forward to hearing inspiring reports from the conference.

Burmans, Australians, Filipinos, Americans joined with these far-away Christians in confession of shared guilt, in praise of God whose love points the way to forgiveness and fellowship among his children. Each in his own way in Tokyo, in Oslo, felt the binding cords and the transcending power of the Christian faith.

Some young people were disturbed by what they regarded as a break in Christian fellowship due to the fact that the receiving of the sacrament in the Anglican and Orthodox services was not open to every sincere Christian. They were sure that this division at the Lord's table seriously weakens the ecumenical church. There were others who regarded this limitation as an inherited legalism that does not impair genuine Christian fellowship. The thinking of all the delegates on this point was facilitated by an

address by Robert Mackie in one pre-communion service, in which he warned against pride on either side and called for a quickened humility among young people that would help all churches overcome such hindrances to complete community.

Turning Point

IT WAS that brief period of leisure between the evening meal and the evening program. The slanting sun still fell brightly on the flower beds alongside Karl Johansgate and invited everyone to free and easy strolling and conversation.

"What do you think of it by now?" one delegate said to the next.

"I'm disappointed. There's so much disagreement and arguing. I don't feel any inspiration. It's not at all like I expected."

This girl from the United States expressed what many people, especially Americans, probably were feeling mid-way in the conference. Perhaps it was because of disillusionment over the division on the Holy Communion, or the unfamiliarity with European administrative methods by which the conference was managed, or the complications in discussion groups due to language difficulties. Certainly the impact of the platform addresses contributed to it.

Each day, either in the morning or evening, the conference assembled under the direction of a delegate chairman to hear an address by a world leader of thought. They were without exception serious, sometimes somber, even frightening, and always mind-stretching. Among the speakers were D. T. Niles of Ceylon, Reinhold Niebuhr, foremost contemporary theologian in the United States, Madeleine Barot, general secretary of Cimade, the united Protestant relief organization in France, Martin Niemoller, former Nazi victim and a leading pastor in German Protestantism, Kirtley Mather, professor of geology at Harvard University. They

paid the delegates the compliment of not watering down their statements to easy simplicity and of not glossing the facts with a false encouragement. Every young person knew deep down that the world is not pretty nor pleasant, but to be reminded by Mlle. Barot of the present conditions of moral chaos in Europe shatters anyone's surface complacency and exposes all one's sensibilities. Every young person realized in a general way that mankind is confronted with evil in many forms, but to confess with Dr. Niebuhr that it is disordered man himself that is evil, and not external and arbitrary conditions, requires an upsetting soul-searching. Every young person awake to the atomic age knew that religion's challenge to science is one of the major issues of modern life but to think through the relationship between Christian faith and science demands extraordinary brainwork even under Dr. Mather's excellent leadership.*

And so the going was tough for a while, and there were those who fell into discouragement. But some admitted even then that Oslo would not have been worth what it cost in human and material resources without this clear-eyed and courageous approach to the religious problems of our time. But what to think, how to think, for the future?

To these questions Pastor Niemoller turned in his address, "Jesus Christ Is Lord of the Future." For many of the delegates, Niemoller was already a legendary figure. Books had been written about him and an American movie had been based on some episodes in his life. It was sometimes hard to separate the real man from the legend, but the young people could recall these bare facts of his life. He entered the ministry after service in the navy in World War I; became head of Lutheran home missionary work in Westphalia, later pastor at Dahlem, residential suburb of Berlin, where he became famous as an anti-Nazi; in 1937 he was imprisoned as

* For complete texts of these and all other main addresses see the official full report. See footnote page 15.

Hitler's personal prisoner, first at Sachsenhausen and then Dachau, eight years, three in solitary confinement; upon release he resumed place of leadership in the Confessing Church of Germany; he is vice-chairman of the Evangelical Church Council in charge of relationships with churches in other lands.

There was no mistaking the real man himself as he and Mrs. Niemoller moved quietly about the conference. His slight figure was not one to command attention in a crowd, but his easy, approachable manner encouraged anyone and everyone to exchange a friendly greeting, to stop for a chat, to share a story. By his own testimony the years of imprisonment became meaningful, and were not just arbitrary suffering, because they revealed to him the goodwill of Christians even in "enemy" nations and brought a vision of the ecumenical church. Since his release he has responded to that goodwill and that vision. It seems not too much to say that in the experience of this one man can be seen the power of love and the work of the Holy Spirit. Out of this spiritual pilgrimage Martin Niemoller with his usual air of quiet, relaxed confidence addressed the conference.

He described the two views of the world's destiny that have in general dominated the thought of the last generation. On the one hand optimism has led man to believe in the inevitability of progress and the validity of his own efforts gradually to improve his condition. On the other hand pessimism or nihilism denied any meaning in history and led man to blind resignation to fate and complete apathy. Both of these views of the future are false and self-deceiving because they do not account for the fact that man is God's creature and has only one choice, "either being God's antagonist or becoming his co-worker, but never being able to disassociate himself from his Creator."

Christ is Lord of the Future and we, men and nations and churches, are on our way to meet Him. For this time of our

pilgrimage we Christians have no program of our own; for the only program needed has been given to us. It is the program of Christ's redeeming love, and now we are bound and free to live this love of His in a world-wide mission, working, men among men, wherever our talents, our gifts, our brains, our knowledge and understanding can be used; only, "Let all things be done with charity," with love for "love is the fulfilling of the law."

It was clear that Oslo would have no easy message, no inspirational directive around which to enlist loyalty and to draft a program. The searching was too deep and the outlook too honest to admit superficial, but comforting, outcomes. It was equally clear that the psychological tide had turned. Disappointment that hard thinking must replace easy feeling and disillusionment that Christendom is divided and cannot quickly overcome those divisions in complete ecumenical expression were gradually being accepted as a necessary travail of the spirit out of which would rise a clearer vision. Delegates began to say: "It is good for us to know these things. We have taken the world Church too glibly for granted. We have only partly understood the state of the world."

Gradually, too, the healing power of fellowship did its subtle work through the casual give-and-take at meals, midnight dormitory bull sessions, comradeship with Norwegian families, shared jokes on the street corner, an outdoor rally, a day-long excursion in the country. Building up in the consciousness of each delegate was the tremendous significance of his own personal experience multiplied more than 1,200 times. "The most important thing about Oslo was that it happened"—this verdict rapidly gained currency. It is one thing to know something; and quite another to experience it.

Last Hours

THE days raced to the final hours of the conference. In the closing plenary sessions interpretation and evaluation of the entire conference were to be made by those officially responsible and also spontaneously from the floor by any delegate present. The great question, What has Oslo meant to us individually and collectively? was to receive its first answers. These would not be the final answers, and many persons would not yet be ready to speak. But there was expectancy in the air as the choir led off in an opening hymn.

This delegate-choir under the directorship of Frederic Miller, and accompanied on the piano by Louis William Hilbert, Jr., both of the United States, had made the music of every session memorable, a universal language that needed no interpreters.

A daily chairman selected from the delegates had presided at each plenary session. Each one had made some introductory remarks before beginning the day's business and the scheduled address. This plan added variety and interest to each session. Thus on successive days the conference had been chaired by: Mrs. Basusova-Vesela, Czechoslovakia; Ernesto Cibils, Uruguay; Miss Ivy Khan, India; Penry Jones, Great Britain; Heinz Martin, Germany; John Karefa-Smart, Sierra Leone. The Americans were proud that Miss Rena Weller, one of their number, took the gavel at the speaker's desk on this last day. Rena, along with the other daily chairmen and the Conference Committee, had drafted an official interpretation, not official in the sense that it was to be regarded as "the" interpretation and as admitting no dissent, but official in the sense that it attempted to sum up what

seemed to be the general consensus and the group response to the eight days' experience.

At this final plenary session, however, it was not the circulated document that claimed the delegates' attention but the speakers from the floor who, hesitantly at first and then more confidently, asked to speak.

The first one to approach the microphone was Keith Torington, from Britain, who read from the sixth chapter of Isaiah, concluding with the words, "Here am I; send me." He spoke of how easy it is to say "Here I am, Lord, but send somebody else," and so to reject our responsibility. "The time has come," he said, "for us to silence our own voices and to let God speak." And then he emphasized Christian responsibility in one's vocation, "to do a specific job in factory, in trade union, in store," and called in conclusion for "obedient, disciplined, ordered stewardship of material possessions."

George Hook from the United States expressed a deep interest in world order. "While hospitalized during the war," he said, "I tried to think of what would be a solution to war. I could find none until there came to me the conviction that Christianity is that hope. Our discussions have been on dissension, loss of hope, chaos. We must not leave the conference with that feeling. We must take to our waiting homes a message of hope: that we will find peace through the Lordship of Jesus Christ."

Perhaps the most moving message came from M. M. Thomas, of the Indian delegation, who was known as an ardent Indian nationalist:

Oslo has brought to my consciousness a greater sense of the realities of the political world and a greater sense of tragedy than I had before. I, for one, feel a growing perplexity. Many of us like me might have realized the tragic problems of color and race, of colonies and power-politics, and of poverty, war and hate with a new acuteness which is depressing.

This knowledge of the ugly realities would have been more bearable if Oslo had given some simple analysis and some simple solution to them. On the other hand, what it did was to break down the answers we had before, thus adding to the perplexity. I remember two very definite experiences of mine at this conference which I feel I must share with you. On the opening day we were in this hall with the news of the Dutch-Indonesian war disturbing us. I knew where my political decision lay and I came to that opening meeting full of righteousness for myself for my political decision, and full of anger against the Dutch and having clearly worked out in my mind how to force the issue of the Dutch-Indonesian struggle on this conference. But I remember how when Dr. Visser 't Hooft confessed the guilt of his nation and extended his hand of Christian fellowship to the Indonesian delegation, the righteousness which I had built on my political decision broke to pieces. . . . It broke down completely the basis on which I was politically standing and politically justifying myself. A sense of common guilt before God in Christ shattered all my politics at that moment. When these and similar experiences came to me, I almost wished I had never come to this conference. Was it not foolishness thus to expose myself to a situation of meeting people under God, when over and over again one's political righteousness broke down and revealed itself as irrelevant?

Certainly, my communist friends are right. The cross of Christ is foolishness, because it is the experience of a self-shattering which in politics makes for weakness and not for strength. But was not that moment when I got shattered within myself the very moment when Oslo became real to me as community? Was not Oslo born in that moment when we broke to pieces in a sense of common guilt before the Word of God?

. . . . Many delegations here who were humble enough to face the foolishness and the weakness of the shattering of their pride under the cross did achieve a community which will be their strength in the days to come as they, in their separate nations, face their political responsibilities. "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted those of low degree." If we share His cross, we shall share His resurrection. The knowledge of common guilt and divine forgiveness as the basis of common life—this is the political message of Oslo, for all I know.

Perplexed we came, more perplexed we return. But we do not despair, for Jesus is Lord.

This faith releases us for a corporate witness to the sacramental significance of all politics to common life.

Near the close came a thoughtfully prepared statement from Bob Bilheimer of the United States, who spoke of Oslo as a symbol of the situation in which the modern Church finds itself, that is, so divided that it feels weak in facing the world.

. . . God is bringing up out of his Church another great reform. This is the ecumenical reformation. . . God is asking us to decide where our real loyalty is, whether in this or that conception, whether in this or that institution, or in Christ Himself.

Have we been hurt and dismayed by the depth of our political and theological and ecclesiastical divisions? We cannot help but be sobered by this, but we must not be discouraged. For the very pain we suffer over disunity is testimony to our sure knowledge that God wants unity.

An Italian delegate had this to say:

Oslo is a witness to the fact that the current agony of the world is a positive one because we see what Christianity faces and its opportunity. In order to express that witness we must find the methods and the language to communicate with our secular world.

There were spokesmen for a round-the-world prayer fellowship and for an emerging World Christian Youth Movement. Finally a girl from Finland spoke of the strengthening of her own faith in the fact of the Lordship of Christ.

It had been a day of long, long thoughts, and at the close it was refreshing to be greeted by the late afternoon sunshine. In a short time the delegates would walk around the corner from St. Olaf's Gate and up a little hill to the church for the closing worship service.

Alex Johnson, the conference chairman, had seemed to be all the time everywhere during the crowded days that

were all too short even when the universe cooperated and daylight persisted until bedtime. If ever he became irritated or impatient with the hundreds of times people said, "Ask Alex," and did just that, he never showed it. Instead, the smile that softened the rather stern lines in his young face and shone in his startlingly blue eyes was ready to welcome every questioner. Managing a conference of the proportions of Oslo requires an infinite amount of adjustment. People, when they travel, do not leave at home their accustomed ways of doing things, and sometimes customs and even standards came up against each other at Oslo. Often Alex Johnson was in the middle of such a clash.

Even on the last day it happened. One of the delegates from Germany had collapsed with a serious illness. The news spread around the conference during the closing hours. Many delegates wanted to take a collection during the final worship service to provide medical attention and hospitalization for this young woman. The chairman and others felt that that was neither the time nor the place for soliciting funds, while others believed that it was both a good time and a good place. "Well," said Alex Johnson at last, "I've made a lot of concessions. I might as well make one more." The offering was taken at the beginning of the service, closing an incident that indicated the kind of insight and generosity of view that characterize the genuine ecumenical spirit.

For many, this young Norwegian pastor, with a background in the resistance movement, stood not only for the hospitality, strength, and graciousness of the people of Norway, but also for the spirit of the conference itself. He had spoken the first official word, and he was to speak the last.

As he mounted the high pulpit in the brilliantly lit Church of the Holy Trinity, his earnest bearing was met with the equally earnest demeanor of the delegates who had come together for the last time. The formality of his white vest-

ments underlined the dignity and solemnity of this final, closing hour. He spoke slowly and strongly:

Let us pray: O Lord, open Thou our eyes that we may see Thy Kingdom. AMEN.

This holy lesson is written in the Book of the Acts, chapter 1, verses 6-8. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Holy Father, sanctify us in thy truth. Thy Word is truth. AMEN.

The sermon explained the central idea of the entire conference, that it is only God and not we ourselves, even as Christians, who can bring the Kingdom of peace and brotherhood. Our part is a witness of obedient loyalty to Jesus Christ and a willingness even in our sin to be used of God. God shall bring the Kingdom.

And then the last words of challenge—"Let us *be* what we are, the citizens of his Kingdom of justice and love." The second World Conference of Christian Youth was formally closed.

Creative Disillusionment

EVEN as the delegates went their several and separate ways from the church on that last night one question filled their minds: What has this meant? And after scattering to all parts of the world, they are still finding answers, still sorting out in their thinking and living the meaning of Oslo. The American groups on homeward bound ships spent long hours in analysis and evaluation. Each delegate has his own interpretation derived from his private experience, but there is emerging a group response that appears to be a common one. If a single phrase can ever be said to sum up as complex an experience as Oslo, it would probably be the two words "creative disillusionment."

Disillusionment came to the Americans because of the critical divisions within the conference, evident not only in the discussion groups but even in worship. In the troubled areas of politics and economics, competing ideologies prevented the arrival at a common mind. Even within Christendom basic theological differences stood in the way of working out a common strategy to deal with the powerful forces of disunity operating in contemporary society. A symbol of this division among Christians was the inability of all delegates to participate in a common celebration of the Lord's Supper. The delegates likewise were not of one mind on their philosophy of Christian education, evidence of which was lack of agreement concerning ways democratic procedure should be carried out in the life of the conference.

It was further disillusioning and perhaps damaging to the pride of the Americans to find delegates from Asia and Africa identifying them with the imperialistic-minded Americans

the colored races know so well. While a number of Americans had publicly acknowledged their own and their churches' share in the shortcomings of their nation, the Americans as a group found that people in other countries often do not discriminate between those American Christians who take their Christianity seriously and people who do not profess Christ at all. The idea persists beyond our shores that America is supposedly a "Christian" nation, yet no group of Americans knows better than the delegates to Oslo that this is true only in a very limited way.

All of these experiences produced a kind of spiritual shock. A what's-the-use frustration gripped many minds and hearts.

But there were other experiences of a most uplifting sort. The fact is that Christians all over the world were discovering one another at first-hand. The strength and vitality of the Christian forces in Asia and Africa and their contributions to the Christian community inspired and stimulated the American delegates. Not only this, but the tragedy and suffering of Christian people in many countries today that met many of the Americans face to face for the first time deepened sympathy and added to the sense of fellowship.

Out of such fellowship and appreciation, coupled with the realization of a common loyalty to Jesus Christ, emerged the conviction that the important thing about Oslo was that it happened. Without such opportunities the chasms grow wider, the faith of Christians becomes sterile, and Christian forces are impotent to face the modern challenge. The delegates reminded themselves that they will not resolve divisions by ignoring them. Full understanding, even though its achievement produces frustration and distress, is the first step to a more united Christendom. Following upon this insight was a second one of equal importance: the Christian faith is the framework within which differences in politics and economics may be dealt with in a spirit of active goodwill. Only with such a spirit will the forces dividing the

world be harmonized. This spirit at Oslo gave meaning to the living power of Christ in a situation that was as difficult as you would want to find anywhere.

An experience of disillusionment that broke down all naïveté and complacency and sentimentality had to proceed and clear the way for these insights. Thus is it possible for the American delegates to Oslo to speak of "creative disillusionment." Out of Oslo many of them have real hope for the development of a world Christian youth movement that will multiply the opportunities, not of reproducing Oslo, but of making its values accessible on a wide scale. The development of the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches is a step in that direction. And there are other steps that depend for initiative not on a staff at the world level but upon the members of any Christian youth group in the United States. These steps are described in the next chapter, "After Oslo—What?" They constitute an important part of the message of Oslo to American youth. The response of youth to that message will be the real meaning of Oslo for the long tomorrow.

After Oslo - What?

OSLO was a beginning not an end. It will have done the job for which it was brought together only in so far as the spirit and the thinking of the delegates at the actual conference are handed on to tens of thousands of young people the world over.

The conference was a stone dropped into a pond, the world. We have got to see that the waves set in motion spread in widening circles to the furthest limits of the pond.

The main purpose of this book is to help those waves. It has not been written to describe what an interesting time a few young people had at a world gathering at Oslo in 1947, an event which has now joined the limbo of history. It has been written for the delegates to help them to get on with the job for which they were sent to Oslo. It has been written for YOU to give *you* delegate status—so that, although you were not among the few who went to Oslo, you may know all about it, capture the spirit of it and carry on its work.

What was Oslo meant to achieve? It was clear from the start that the subjects for discussion were not matters about which young people—or old—could say anything startlingly new, or about which any entirely new course of action could be mapped out—such subjects as Christian Responsibility in a Secular Environment, World Order, and Education in the Modern World.

The objectives of Oslo were:

- (a) To further the work of co-operation among Christians of different churches, races, and nations.
- (b) To begin to train a new generation of leaders for that task.
- (c) To give a great stimulus to the study, by young people of all nations, of some of the fundamental and perplexing issues which Christians have to face today.
- (d) To drive home and demonstrate the fact that the only solution lies in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

When one looks at these objectives carefully one realizes that all are long term processes, not jobs to be achieved in ten days at Oslo. It becomes clear, as was said above, that Oslo was just a beginning, not something complete in itself, and that the suc-

cess or failure of Oslo was not determined during the conference but depends upon the efforts of tens of thousands in every country to push ahead with those twin Oslo objectives, co-operation and study.*

While the conference was still a very fresh experience, many of the American delegation were adding up its meaning for Christian youth in the United States. From a paper they prepared on board a home-going boat and from many other statements, both oral and written, the following chief points of significance have emerged:

1. *The sense of fellowship and spiritual enrichment that comes from first-hand contact with Christian people of many races and nations means that we must find ways of increasing such contacts.* The personal discovery of the so-called "younger churches" in those lands usually labeled "mission" was a source of inspiration and encouragement. "We came to value the quality of the leadership produced in these churches, especially the churches of Asia. Whereas many of our experiences with the World Church gave us the feeling that it was at times and in some places, impotent, inert, or irrelevant, nevertheless these criticisms were hardly applicable to the activities of the churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Representatives of these churches especially impressed us with their evangelistic zeal so marvelously coupled with a social and political concern."

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUTH AND STUDENT GROUPS

Things to Do†

(a) Make contact with people from overseas living in your community, students in nearby colleges and universities, trainees in industry and agriculture, refugees. Many of these

* From *Oslo Calling* by Mabel Small and Norman J. Bull, British report of the Oslo Conference. Used with permission.

† Some of the suggestions in Part Seven are adapted from *Oslo Calling*. Used with permission.

people badly want more touch with Christians here, *especially contact which will lead to invitations to their homes and to real fellowship*. Some of these people came to this country as Christians, brought up by Christian missionaries. For lack of Christian fellowship some have returned home some years later disillusioned and having lost their Christian faith.

Invite these people to your meetings, social occasions, summer camps and conferences. Have them describe the work of the churches in their own countries, youth work and other matters of common interest. Ask them to suggest ways by which you may make a link between the young people of their countries and ours. The board of foreign missions of your church and the Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students, 347 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y., can help you locate students from abroad who may be living in your area.

(b) Learn how the church and the youth and student movements have become and are becoming world-wide. Secure a list or catalog of current youth materials from one or more sources: your denominational headquarters; the Missionary Education Movement, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.; the United Student Christian Council, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.; the National Young Men's Council of the Y.M.C.A., 347 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.; the National Board Y.W.C.A., Community Division, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.; the United Christian Youth Movement, 203 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago 1, Ill. Select the materials of most appeal and organize an interest group or study class.

Examine the material you receive for missionary lessons, programs, projects, and work up some special interest in them.

(c) Spread the message of Oslo. 1) If an Oslo delegate is in or near your community, ask him to speak about the con-

ference to your group. A list of the 280 American delegates and leaders is available from the U.C.Y.M., 203 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago 1, Illinois, or the World Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. A partial list of delegates from abroad now residing in this country may be secured from the World Council of Churches. 2) Present conference film "Oslo, 1947," 16mm, 20 minutes sound. Available from the Religious Film Association Depository, 347 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.; also from the World Council of Churches, the United Christian Youth Movement or your denomination's visual aids service. Rental rate is \$4.00 per showing. 3) Or show slides (black and white) of the conference. Film strip of sixty-five pictures and script (30 to 45 minutes) available from the World Council of Christian Education, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. Sale price is \$1.50.

(d) Find out about opportunities for short-term service in other countries by writing your denomination's youth department or the Interdenominational Commission on Youth Service Projects, 203 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago 1, Illinois. Write also to the United Student Christian Council, 156 Fifth Ave., New York 10, N. Y.; the World Student Service Fund, 20 West 40th Street, New York, N. Y.; National Young Men's Council of Y.M.C.A., 347 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.; National Board Y.W.C.A., Community Division, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y. Get in touch with persons who have rendered such service for a personal account of their experience.

2. *We must find out more about the nature and the witness of the Christian Church.*

"We found the Church divided. We had forcibly pressed upon us the inability of the communions of Christendom to observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at a common table. We were amazed at what a wide variety of theological

thinking was represented when the various youth at Oslo made so simple and basic a statement as 'Jesus Christ is Lord.' What seemed important to some was of little significance at all to others. At Oslo, naïve hopes for an early unity of Christendom were made less simple by the concrete facts of our differences. We find ourselves, however, more eager than ever that the ecumenical church be a reality. We pray with all our hearts that 'they may be one.' "

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUTH AND STUDENT GROUPS

Things to Do

(a) Find out, first, about the history, tradition and practices of your own church. See your denominational literature for study materials.

(b) Study the other churches in your community and in the world to learn the reasons for points of difference and similarity. Discuss in your group what "ecumenical" means. Read *Youth in the World Church* by Oliver Tomkins on the role of youth in the ecumenical movement (World Council of Churches, 25 cents per copy). Write to your own denomination and to the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches (297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.) for materials. For study materials produced by the World's Student Christian Federation's Commission on Ecumenism write to the United Student Christian Council, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

(c) Study the part the church should play in American life: What is the real purpose of the church? How far do the churches you know fulfill that purpose? The Oslo delegates had this to say: "We were made more critical of the condition of American churches. We are fearful lest our churches become so identified with society that they lose their sense of uniqueness and evangelistic drive and substitute social custom for God's law of righteousness and love. There is need

for definite conflict between the church and society. We must sharpen the distinction between Christianity and Americanism (as the latter now exists) in an effort to make the latter more consistent with the former." Write to your denominational publication office for available materials.

(d) Learn about the World Council of Churches, and especially the plans for its first Assembly of Churches in Amsterdam, summer, 1948, as well as its new Youth Department with a program of youth interest and activity throughout the world. Order *The Story of the World Council of Churches* from the World Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at 25 cents per copy, also *Preview of Amsterdam*, free, and *Pilgrimage to Amsterdam* by Henry Smith Leiper and H. G. G. Herklots at \$1.00 per copy from the same address.

(e) Secure facts about the history, the international camps, conferences, projects and other activities of three pioneering Christian organizations in world-wide youth work: The World's Alliance of Y.M.C.A.'s, write to National Young Men's Council, 347 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.; The World's Y.W.C.A., write to National Board Y.W.C.A., Community Division, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.; World's Student Christian Federation, write to United Student Christian Council, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

(f) Find out how to organize a Christian Youth Council in your community. Write the United Christian Youth Movement, 203 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago 1, Illinois, for *Christian Youth in Cooperative Action*, 20 cents per copy. Through such a council, you can carry out *b*, *c*, and *d* above in a splendid way.

Students, get in touch with the U.S.C.C. about ways of organizing cooperative activities on the campus.

3. *We must study carefully the relationship between Christianity and politics and become more mature in this field.*

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUTH AND STUDENT GROUPS

Things to Do

(a) Organize fact finding groups to discuss such questions as: Why do Christians in other lands call the United States "imperialist"? How do the practices of American business in other countries influence the Christian mission there? What is the political responsibility of the Christian in his local community, in his state, in the nation, in international affairs?

(b) Find out about the political action seminars sponsored by the United Christian Youth Movement. Order *Youth and Political Action* from the U.C.Y.M. office at 20 cents per copy.

Write the National Intercollegiate Christian Council, 347 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y., for materials on how to be effective in political affairs.

Write the United Student Christian Council for information concerning the activities of the W.S.C.F.'s Political Commission.

Additional materials in this field may be had from the National Young Men's Council of the Y.M.C.A. and the National Board Y.W.C.A., Community Division.

(c) Become more informed about the United Nations and learn how it may become more effective in bringing about world order. Discuss in your group 1) the way in which the world-wide church is related to world politics and 2) the relationship of Christian missions to world peace. For materials write to your denominational headquarters; to the Department of International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.; to the American Association for the United Nations, Inc., 45 East 65th Street, New York, N. Y.

4. *We must become more conscious of America's responsibility for world leadership and rehabilitation.* Oslo delegates were profoundly moved by the personal tragedy and suffering especially in Europe and Asia. This suffering was not confined to the physical effects of malnutrition, disease, and exposure but included those even more serious symptoms of spiritual debilitation, despair, hopelessness, apathy, loss of moral standards. The discovery was made also that Americans and American life are grossly misinterpreted in many sections of the world. Much of this misunderstanding can be laid at the door of American movies that frequently distort our national life and that are taken even more seriously abroad than at home. There is much in American democracy to be deplored and corrected, but there is also much to be proud of and much that a sick world needs. Because of America's political and economic power, she must assume a leading role in the world but at the same time, she must put her best foot forward and make sure that the sound and healthy aspects of American democracy are expressed abroad.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUTH AND STUDENT GROUPS

Things to Do

(a) Find out how church groups may help relieve and rehabilitate the suffering peoples of the world. Write to your own denomination's agency for relief and reconstruction or to Church World Service, 214 East 21st Street, New York 10, N. Y. Organize within your group a regular schedule of relief projects, involving both money and goods.

Learn what can be done through the World Student Service Fund, 20 West 40th Street, New York, N. Y., the over-all American student relief and reconstruction fund-raising agency. The United Student Christian Council can give you details of the specifically Christian reconstruction work of the world-wide student Christian enterprise through W.S.C.F.

Write to the National Young Men's Council of the Y.M.C.A. and the National Board Y.W.C.A., Community Division, for an account of what can be done through their channels of relief and reconstruction.

Whenever possible and practical, make a direct contact with persons in other countries in order to start the flow of Christian fellowship, often more desired by hungry people than bread.

(b) Become informed about the United States government's program of relief and rehabilitation, and organize your group (especially a local Christian Youth Council or a Campus Co-operative Council) to take an effective part, not only in cooperation, but in community education.

(c) Make a thorough study of American democracy, perhaps through a school or college group, to learn its strong and weak points and to discover what it may contribute to the world and how. In your group discuss the responsibility of Christians in preserving and strengthening democracy.

(d) Study the movies you see to determine what they would say by implication to people in another country about the United States and its citizens. Through your group, find ways to register this judgment with motion picture producers. Examine your denominational literature for guidance.

5. *We must expand and enlarge our use of the Bible.* Because the Bible is the record of the Judeo-Christian revelation, that is, of God's judgment and love of man, it is the Christian source book. After studying the Bible in company with Christians from around the world we are more convinced than ever that we must be informed about the Bible, understand its meaning, and make that meaning vital in our lives. This requires study, reflection, prayer by individuals and within the Christian fellowship.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUTH AND STUDENT GROUPS

Things to Do

(a) Give special emphasis in your group to Bible study, using your denominational or organizational materials for guidance.

(b) Encourage the habit of individual Bible reading by furnishing appropriate helps. Seek suggestions from your denominational or organizational headquarters.

(c) Strengthen the practice of using the Bible in personal daily devotions.

(d) Encourage the selection by students of courses in Bible in school and college.

(e) Stimulate appreciation of the Bible through the reading of such books as *Great Is the Company* by Violet Wood, 90 cents paper, \$1.50 cloth, Friendship Press, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., and through listening to radio program, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, sponsored by Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, Sundays, 6:30 p.m., E.S.T. A number of movies on Bible themes are available. Ask the visual aids service of your denomination or organization for recommended films.

FOR FURTHER READING

The Report of the Second World Conference of Christian Youth, edited by Paul G. Macy. The official conference report including an account and an interpretation of what happened as well as full records of the addresses, discussion group reports, statements and messages presented to the conference, and the Bible Study Outlines. 256 pp. \$1.00.

Youth in the World Church, by Oliver Tomkins. A reading booklet presenting the Oslo Conference in its historical setting. Deals with the idea and need of a World Christian Community, our ecumenical heritage, the Amsterdam Conference, and the Oslo Conference. 48 pp. 25c.

Ten Questions. Basic program and study material for all types of Christian youth groups studying the issues faced at Oslo. This timely material has been made available in many languages and is now being used in many parts of the world. 11 pamphlets in a set. 50c a set.

Christianity as a Youth Movement, edited by Edwin Espy. An account of contemporary Christian youth movements in various parts of the world. 64 pp. 10c.

Christian Youth in the United States of America, by Rowena Ferguson. An account of the life and work of the Christian youth and student movements during the war years and the post-war period. Available from the United Christian Youth Movement or the World Council of Churches. Mimeographed. 27 pp. 25c.

Pilgrimage to Amsterdam, by Leiper and Herklots. A popular discussion setting forth the background, purpose, program, meaning, themes, and methods for arousing general interest and spiritual partnership in the First World Assembly of Churches, Amsterdam, 1948. 96 pp. \$1.00.

*All of the above are available from the World Council of Churches,
297 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y.*

Conference Choir
at Youth Rally in
Bislet Stadium



Conference Parade
entering Bislet
Stadium



African, American, Korean

Morning Coffee

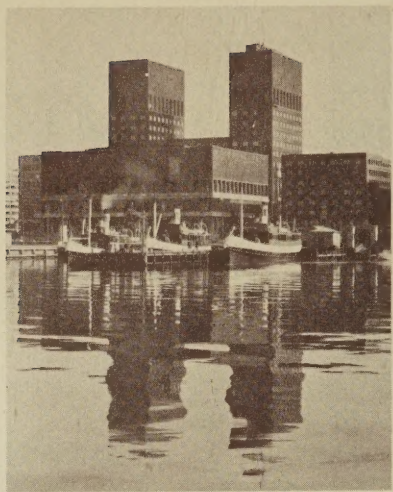




Discussion Group

United States and India





Oslo Town Hall



Hardanger Fjord